

Paris 9 Rue Richelieu. May 14th '51

Dear Charlie,

I set my journal just as I was going to dine with Mr. Webb. Having deposited all our luggage at our "Aubergins" Mr. W. lives almost out of Paris quite up in the Champs Elysees, but it was too late to see any-thing of the pretty garden behind the house. We found quite an assem-
 blage there. Mr. Webb's son, ^{Philippe} is an old friend & acquaintance of Dr. Jay's & talks a little English. But I bravely dashed into French with him - The son talks English quite well. Mr. Webb who is Chief under the Minister of Finance & who has a very interesting face, intelligent & sober - He is fond of botany as an amateur; Dr. Wronski, the numismatist, a young Scandinavian from the Ca-
 nary Isles, a handsome young fellow, & a young German. None of these spoke English - Then a Mr. et Madame Duval - He is speaking English, but they have lived a long while in Brazil - She is French, but talks English very well & many other languages. - We had a very pleasant dinner, entirely in French style, & something excellent of its kind, for Mr. Webb understands all matters of the table very well. - The French fashion is for ladies & gentlemen to leave the table together, so about 9 o'clock we all moved again into the Salon. The house seems bright but not showily furnished, & the rooms are large. And in no true French house do you find the floors entirely carpeted. Here the dining-room was no usual, a raised floor. - I had eaten more varieties than usual for dinner & drank more wine than I commonly do for I could not get the water conveniently & after we were in the Salon again "Cafe noir" was handed round - Now "Cafe noir" you must know is the very quintessence of coffee! & one generally takes a little once cup with a great deal of sugar & without cream - I innocently drank a cup of it & presently when talking with Dr. Duval began to feel very uncomfortable & strange. I soon found to distinguish myself in foreign hands, but for the first time in our life. I felt faint, & the first thing I knew Mr. Duval was touching Dr. Jay on the shoulder & he came & led me out of the room - it was soon over, but they thought it more prudent to keep quiet, so I had the satisfaction of passing the remaining 1/2 hour in the ante-room hearing the merry laughs & gaily voices in the Salon - We got back to our lodgings about 10 1/2 & I must confess my heart was sickening about them all day, I was afraid we had not been par-
 ticular enough in our bargains as the lady seemed keen & quick, & the French have such a reputation of making the most of you - Then as the rooms looked only into the courtyard. I feared they would be dark & dreary & that you could see them! - I am a terrible French; all elegance, but don't I too close behind the scenes. However we find things on the whole quite com-
 fortable, the landlady seems very obliging & anxious we should have what we want, & I am willing to bear with some inconveniences for the sake of the advantages in many ways, the little jump into French life & the great advan-

tegen in learning to talk French, in which I believe you I have made some progress - But I must give some description of our rooms - I have told you before how the French houses are built on such a great scale surrounding a court yard, & with fine large windows, & each family occupies but one floor, we are in the second - that is up two flights, for the lowest is shops or stables or something of the sort; in this case stables - You enter by one of the double doors painted to look like bronze, (for all the doors to shew in the suite of apartments are double, opening in the middle, & one half generally kept shut; any other door is covered with the same paper as the rest of the room, & therefore invisible as it were), & turning short to your right you find yourself at another door & enter our salon - The floor is nicely waxed & one of the first sounds I hear every morning is Juliette brushing it diligently with a short stiff brush on her feet with which she polishes it all over - The room is long & narrow with two large French windows, between them a console as Madame calls it; namely a high pier table decorated with two handsomely marble vases & a great china machine for making coffee, the chairs are mahogany with red Morocco seats, & the opposite of the hall is filled up by what Madame calls the "canapé" a long low sofa - Sundry little tables in the corners complete the furniture, & in this room we are jammed with two cupboards or cases in the wall, where some of our numerous articles are deposited - Passing through this room to the door facing, you enter the salon bed-chamber, for you are only to imagine a parlour with a bed in it. It is a square room, also two windows which of course are curtained in both rooms with muslin & modern damask, which is also the cover of the furniture - No shadow of a carpet blinds our eyes, (by the way, waxed floors are cold things for French houses, though Lizzie would assure them they are so neat). Between the windows is a little writing table like yours, i.e. only not so pretty, & which serves as toilet-table & bureau; the walls are hung with pictures & engravings, & opposite the window is a large book-case - On one side is a handsome fireplace with its broad marble mantel-piece decorated with two straight-topped columns of scotiole, & of which Dr. Gray is asking what they are meant for? I say for ornament; two rather dusky glass vases, & a Doric vase in the centre. I am particular; but all these things are put down in the inventory when we take the rooms, so as to make sure we don't run off with anything or hide it because we have broken it; there is a large handsome mirror over the mantelpiece which answers for us the useful purposes of shaving & dressing ourselves; & two nice little jany standing desks, a conch, arm-chair, &c. &c. are

about - But you will ask what makes it a bed-room? Oh on the opposite side is a French bed with white muslin curtains, of limited size I am sure, & in one remote corner is the miniature of French wash-stands, much smaller than yours, but which Madame thinks affords wonderful accommodations, inasmuch as it has a "grande" basin added to its own baby affair; but as the French basins are all of porcelain, you may imagine their splendour is not the most impressive thing to Dr. Gray & me - Of course the decoration of the room is somewhat disarranged by my trunks & carpet-bag, & one or two chairs must fill the place of ~~wardrobe~~ ^{wardrobe} & bureau - But I live quite in French style, & receive my guests in our chamber because it is the most comfortable room & where we have the fire - I don't imagine a French fire is the great comfortable thing we imagine by a fire; that would shock ideas of French economy - So when the mantelpiece is wonderfully large & heavy, ^{though very low} but gradually diminished with marks facing until you get a small opening upon the hearth, about 12 feet square, a huge stone back-log, & a little nice pair of andirons make your establishment - The custom is never to remove the ashes & cinders all winter, but they are shoveled to one side or upon the top - So you may imagine by degrees how the fire, which is made by laying a stick of wood upon the ashes & cinders & piling on a few coals, is gradually pushed out into the room, & it becomes a ticklish matter to light it successfully without being smothered with smoke - But a fire is an expensive luxury, over which one never closes - There can you now imagine, our elegant I did not know whether to laugh or cry in improving them, the first day, but I got some to bed - But had a bad night from my indigestion, but my feelings were somewhat cheered on opening my eyes in the morning to see that a gleam of sunshine fell on our windows in the morn'g, creeping over the opposite side of the house, as we are on the back of the Court-yard - And then my eyes turned on the elegant cornice around the ceiling, & I came to the conclusion the combination was too absurd - I did not hurry myself about getting up in the morn'g, & Dr. Gray went out to breakfast in his way to the Jardin des Plantes, & when I was ready I rang for the tea he had ordered for me - I was a little bewildered when it was brought in - A small waiter, a little tea-bottle as large as a large coffee-pot upon it, a tea-cup & saucer, a bowl standing in a plate with a large spoon, a candle, & a great sauce-pan full of boiled milk, a sugar bowl & a long roll of bread - I modestly contented myself with the tea-cup, milk & helping myself with a tea-spoon from the sauce-pan, & took a little end of the

roll - The boiled milk looked more appropriate when Dr. Jay had it with his
coffee next morning, but we are now so far civilized as to have the milk
in a little pitcher, Dr. Jay has the bowl & great spoon for his coffee, I take
the tea-cup, & of late we have got so far as to have plates for our roll & butter.
But the coffee is good, the rolls very nice, the butter excellent, & as Pat
says, 'looks as nothing Harris's everything.' - But this breakfast you see
is not French fashion - Madame has her cup of coffee in bed in the 'morning'.
Then she gets up or not as she pleases, but at 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 11 she has her breakfast
a "cotelette" a "bifteck", &c. & wine, a sort of small dinner, & then she dines a
gain at 6 - And this is the general French custom. She is sure I don't
eat enough - I ought to have a 'bifteck' for breakfast - I spent the day in
unpacking & getting things where one could put their hand upon them,
with occasional flying visits & offers of assistance from Madame - And
when Dr. Jay came back we went out to get our first dinner at a restaurant,
I felt shy & was very particular before I would go in, but so it turned out
we chose the first one, & had a very good & simple dinner - You can
choose just what you please at a restaurant, & so regulate the expense as
you please by the number of dishes & their prices, which are set down &
pinned to them in the carte from which you choose, & as we dine now every
day at the restaurant unless we have an invitation out to dine, we have
got to know them very well, & I feel quite at my ease, there is a good
deal of difference - As to expense, you can go to the Café de Paris & have
an elegant dinner from 12 fr. upwards, or you may dine most nicely
in the Place of the Madeleine for 4 - When people go together, you ask
for two people a portion for one, for 3 for 2, & so on, only if you have
not quite dinner enough you order a course or plat as they call it
more. For wines you order some meat cooked with vegetables, each vege-
table is a separate course - I mean to make you a list out, Charlie,
against you come to Paris of good places & good dishes for dinner. Albert
Jacks, & I, we make the mistake at first of ordering too much - And
it takes some little habit to know what the dishes are, & how to combine
them judiciously. It is very amusing for awhile, but I should tire of it
had it to last long. And I think for a permanent English cooking
the best, but I should like to engraft some of the French dishes - We
passed the evening pretty much on the Boulevard, which are always
a gay sight with their crowds of well dressed people & the gay displays
and the shop windows - For if that display the French have certainly the secret.

Thursday, March 18

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The next morning brought me an enclosure from the bankers with the enclosed letters which I acknowledged in my last letter, from Charlie since I mean to enlighten you all a little on the subject of postage, concerning which you seem wonderfully ignorant - Know therefore all letters coming across the Atlantic & going over England, France, Switzerland & Germany are regulated as to postage entirely by weight - Italy I believe not, for there an envelope is charged as a double letter, but in the other places you may use as many or as few sheets as you please, provided you don't overstep ^{any} bounds - England allows the same weight as we do, $\frac{1}{2}$ an oz, & you can get two good thick sheets with that - an envelope, & with thin thin paper I can put three - Now as to your continuing on the other side of the Atlantic to save your own pockets I must leave that to your own wisdom, & indeed all our letters being forwarded by our bankers, we must pay English postage on them, but as that is only $\frac{1}{2}$ penny the half oz. it is not a thing to be thought of - But France is a different matter - In France you pay 16 sous under a $\frac{1}{4}$ oz, if up to the $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. more, & over a $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. double - And though $\frac{1}{2}$ an oz holds a good deal, it is astonishing how soon the snark comes down to the $\frac{1}{4}$ - So you see in writing on to the continent heavy or light paper does make a great deal of difference, especially if you have a number to come from one place at once - Some letters do ~~from~~ Liverpool this week for instance Sue & Charlie came by the $\frac{1}{4}$ oz, postage, & one week it was three - Uncle Howell said their postage need to average \$2.00 a week, on the letters they received. ^{Because each person sent a separate letter, & generally on our heavy paper, one sheet of ord. with envelope is over the $\frac{1}{4}$ oz.} If you write direct to Germany you have more weight allowed, but anything that goes through France shares the French regulations, & so Italy & many places the mails are regularly through France, unless you write other directions on the cover - Now I don't write this for my own benefit, for by the time you get this we may be back in England, & the few cents a week are nothing, & do not compensate for the trouble to you to write on thin paper or the effort of reading - But for the advantage of future correspondents, & to prove that I am not a "humbug" as Patrick & Charles say -

10 o'clock - I cannot say how vexed I am that my morning has gone - But Mademoiselle came in for her usual morn'g. talk, & said I was writing & she would not stay - But we got talking, & I was interested in trying to explain to her some things, & give her better ideas, for truly it is sad to me to see how, though I think many souls seek after it in France, how little they understand the highest & noblest ideas of life - High morality, high spiritual faith! - Sometime I must give you an account of her, for she is really an interesting woman; & one hardly knows how near, how forcible, how ab-

and language may be until they hear an intelligent French man talk
You must but admire the language + To get back however to Thursday
a fortnight ago, now I am behind-hand! We dined with Dr. Gray & had a
very pleasant time. We were invited to meet a Madame Vilmoren & her
husband, he is quite distinguished as an horticulturist, & he & his wife
have been making investigations for some years in the varieties of straw-
berries, a very learned work, in which Madame V. has shown great ability,
& makes all the drawings for her husband. Dr. Gray told us as something
very remarkable that she was nursing her youngest child, so we must be
punctual as she must go early, but still I imagined a middle aged
French woman, with her quick, black eye, & sharp speech, especially a "femme
savante" - But I have not less power of knowing just how people should look,
& when a little, blump, pretty, soft, delicate little woman came in, with soft
black eyes, round face quite childlike in its youthfulness & modest, innocent
expression, which was so well set off by her deep purple dress & cap with the
white ribbons on her dark hair, giving her such a look of purity & whiteness,
I could not get quite reconciled at once, & suddenly must one set of ideas be
pulled down to build up another; her manners were equally soft, gentle &
simple, & yet so naturally enthusiastic & earnest - Her husband has a
handsome face & head, but is lame & can move only with crutches - They
both look almost Spanish they are so dark - To complete the circle Dr. Gray
was there, Mrs. Webb, & ^{because} Dr. Gray & his son, with whom I had a good deal of lively
talk in English - We had a pleasant dinner, & then after Madame Vil-
moren left, for it seems she had come from some distance in the
country to see us, & brought her baby to pass the night in Paris! After she
was gone the gentlemen had some botanical discussion over some
specimens of straw-~~berry~~ plants Dr. Vilmoren had brought for Dr. Gray
to see - He is anxious to get specimens of all the varieties peculiar to
America, & I am going to beg of you, dear papa, to notice any fine plants
you have this summer, of Norway seedling & any other American varieties,
& stick something in to mark them, & then next autumn I shall beg
the favour of taking up pieces of those plants to send to Dr. Vilmoren -
I may as well add at the same time some other requests - Some of our
English friends are anxious for specimens of the beans we raise for
stale with their names - So I herewith make a petition to Beverly & Litch-
field, for specimens, this summer, of all sorts, & carefully labelled by the known
name - I want also the handsomest specimens of varieties of Indian corn

very thoroughly dried, for some of the English botanical societies -
Once ^{winter} squash seeds, with their names - I should know early because
the season for these things is upon us sooner than one imagines - We
have seen strawberries at the restorators ever since we have been in
Paris, but not so cheap that we can afford to indulge in them
yet - They ask 1.50, 2. or 3 francs for little pots that hold perhaps
6 or 8 of the large English variety!

Saturday Dr. Gray & I went up to call on Madame Jeanne Curie, & com-
ing back came down the Champs Elysees, where they were making
grand preparations for the next day's fete, the anniversary of the
declaration of the ^{constitution of the} French republic, & another much more in-
teresting event to us - Our marriage - Dr. Gray says which will last
the longest? if one may judge by sincerity & intention, ours should,
for the condition was "till death do you part." But if we may be
true to ourselves, many signed the French Constitution as a con-
sistent present arrangement, for as for faith in it I don't see much a-
mong the French, as far as I have opportunities to see - But they
were making splendid preparations for this fete up & down the great
avenue of the Champs Elysees, which is a close row with this enormous
wide road, bordered with trees leading through it, the vista at one end
terminated by the magnificent Arc de l'Etoile, & the other looking across
the Place de la Concorde, the obelisk of Luxor in the centre, up this
central avenue of the Garden of the Tuilleries to the palace itself - I
suppose no other city can show a more magnificent place - Well on each
side they were raising enormous statues of distinguished men in
France made of plaster, the inside stuffed with straw, & the
effect was very well of bodies without legs & legs without bodies,
& straw sticking out for joints &c. &c. - For Sunday's fete I must
wait until the next, only thanking you & Lizzie for last week's
letters Lizzie particularly for her account of Mary Hopkin - Father, Charles
& Sue for their letters,

& with many regrets for my negligent correspondence,
I am always most lovingly, Jeanne -

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